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ABSTRACT

This booklet is designed to help educators plan and implement language and literacy programs and related professional development opportunities for elementary school educators. A primary focus of the document is on the tensions that exist between recent local, state, and national initiatives to improve the quality of schooling and current understandings of literacy and language learning. These tensions center on appropriate models of learning (transmission vs. transactional learning), views of knowledge (knowledge as discrete content vs. connected understandings), equity issues (race, culture, and class), purposes of education (preparation for higher education and work, social and personal uses), the role of teachers (teachers as technicians or professionals), and the role of standards (gatekeepers vs. motivators, fixed or dynamic). Questions for reflection and discussion concerning each area are included. An appendix provides information on educational reform in Washington, Oregon, and Alaska, as well as on the National Educational Goals, as revised in the Goals 2000: Educate America Act. (Contains 27 references.) (MDM)

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# Tensions to Resolve: Improving Literacy Programs in the Context of School Reform

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> *"To know where and how to seek standards, we think one must come to terms with the fact that good standards are not things which are clear, discrete, and fit for checklists. Much in the fashion of Aristotle, who claimed that essence is necessarily intertwined with experience, we believe that standards cannot exist apart from experience. To answer the question, 'What is good enough here?' one must refer to images of* ***good enough****—the way people look, talk, act, or feel while being* ***good enough*** *in whatever performance they attempt. And in the process, one should not stray too far from where* ***here*** *is."*
>
> *—McDonald, Rogers, and Sizer (1993, p. 4)*

Educational reform in the Pacific Northwest and across the nation poses several challenges for schools. Educators must not only prepare students to achieve state-level outcomes, but they must also design programs that meet the objectives of the Goals 2000 Educate America Act and the emerging national standards in English and language arts. At the same time, educators in the region are committed to local determination of curriculum and professional development as part of the changes in education.

Oregon superintendent/principal Joanne Yatvin calls for local identification of educational needs and support to meet them when she writes:

> "I have lost faith in any and all large-scale, organized solutions to educational problems. They just put more paperwork, regulations, and job titles between children and the help they need. Where schools are failing, it is not because they don't have enough projects and programs, but because they have lost the human touch." (1994, p. 37).

This booklet is intended to assist educators in making local decisions with a human touch, specifically about language and literacy programs and related professional development. Language and literacy permeate every aspect of learning, making language arts not only the messiest of school disciplines, but also, arguably, the most



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encompassing. New terms for the field such as communication arts, whole language, language across the curriculum, and integrated language arts attest to the range of approaches and definitions in use (Tchudi, 1995). Whatever we call it, the school literacy program deserves examination in the context of state and national reform agendas.

We might begin with some questions. What is the role of language arts in various state and national reform initiatives, such as Washington's Essential Learnings, Oregon's Educational Act for the 21st Century, the Alaska Student Performance Standards, and Goals 2000? (See Appendix A for descriptions of state and national reform initiatives discussed here.) How will the emerging national standards in English and language arts affect expectations for student performance in oral and written language? These questions suggest some tensions relative to literacy instruction that are inherent in reform efforts. In grappling with these tensions at the local school or district level, how do we:

- Ensure a larger role for language arts in the curriculum than mere preparation for the workforce?

- Adopt language arts standards that promote equity as well as excellence?

- Sustain a learner-centered philosophy of education while developing performance-based curriculum and assessment?

- Develop integrated learning experiences which richly draw on and develop literacy and language?

Recently, the Literacy, Language and Communication Program (LLCP) of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) has organized state-level focus groups and conducted practitioner surveys to explore questions that bear on language and literacy in the context of state and national reform efforts. In addition, these initiatives are suggesting literacy program and staff development approaches that meet the needs of the state and the region. The focus groups are designed to build a network for inquiry into the changes posed for language arts by educational reform. The same spirit of inquiry drives the discussion in this paper.

However desirable the changes proposed in state or national education reform, the work of creating the kind of schools we want takes place at the individual school level. Furthermore, it is the local school community that will be there for the long haul, sustaining the changes they have made to improve their school. Educators and community members are invited to use this paper to examine a major component of their school program, literacy development. One way they may do this is to reflect on current classroom practices in light of their personal and collective beliefs about language and literacy. The experience of one LLCP project, *Equity in Early Literacy Development*, has affirmed the value of staff collaboration to develop a philosophy about language and literacy, which then serves as a template for teachers to consult in reflecting on their own classroom practices. Continuing this inquiry with documents from state and national reform efforts, including the emerging English and language arts standards, is one way to ensure local design of curriculum best suited to the literacy and language needs of students. It is also a fine model of locally designed and responsive staff development in the best tradition of teacher research.

***However desirable the changes proposed in state or national education reform, the work of creating the kind of schools we want takes place at the individual school level.***

State and national reform initiatives are, of course, designed to effect improvements in the quality of schooling and thus in student learning outcomes. Yet there are some areas in which the reform agenda seems to be out of sync with the most current understandings of literacy and language learning. In this discussion, these areas are described as *tensions*, suggesting the need for careful study and dialogue among educators, as well as among community members and policymakers, to ensure optimal literacy instruction as part of the changes in education. The major areas of tension for literacy in education reform include:

- Models of learning
- Views of knowledge
- Equity issues
- Purposes of education
- Role of teachers
- Role of standards

Each of these tensions is explored in a separate section in the remainder of the booklet. Members of the school community may choose to read and discuss the entire booklet, using the questions for reflection and discussion at the end of each section. Or, they may decide to focus on the areas of tension most relevant to their school's literacy program, reading and discussing those sections. Another approach, which may involve the entire staff as well as parent and community members, is to use the jigsaw method, with small groups taking responsibility to read and discuss individual sections in preparation for sharing their insights with the whole group.

However school communities use the booklet, the goal should be to involve key stakeholders—teachers, administrators, community members, parents—in substantive dialogue about their vision for students as literate beings. Sustaining this dialogue will continue to affirm ownership of the vision and support its realization through experiences across the curriculum that help students develop personally and socially effective uses of literacy.

## Models of Learning

### Support for Transactional Model

How does language learning occur? Research from a wide variety of disciplines now supports an active concept of literacy and language learning, sometimes called a **transactional model**: The learner actively engages—or transacts—with the environment, including people and material resources, in order to learn. Some contrasts between this model and the traditional **transmission model** are listed on the next page (Weaver, 1990, p. 9).

| Transmission Model | Transactional Model |
| --- | --- |
| Emphasis is on *direct teaching*, controlled by the program and by the teacher. | Emphasis is on *learning*, facilitated but not controlled by the teacher. |
| Basis is the *behaviorist* model of learning. | Basis is the *cognitive social* model of learning. |
| Learning is viewed as moving from *part to whole*; that is, it's a matter of building from simple to complex, from smaller to larger skills. | Learning is seen as occurring from *whole to part*; that is, smaller parts of a task are learned within the context of a meaningful whole. |
| Learning is viewed as *habit formation*; speaking and writing correct responses and avoiding incorrect ones are very important. | Learning is seen as the result of *complex cognitive processes* that can be facilitated by teachers and enhanced by peer interaction. |
| Since *correctness* is valued, risk-taking is discouraged and or penalized. | *Risk-taking*, and hence "errors" are seen as essential for learning. Approximation is celebrated. |
| All learners are expected to *master* what is taught when it is taught; thus, most children experience varying degrees of failure. | Learners are expected to be at *different stages*, to develop at their own pace and in their own ways; thus, there is no concept of "failure." |
| Ability to *reproduce, orally or in writing, a predetermined correct response* is taken as evidence of learning. | Ability to *apply knowledge and to think in novel ways* is considered evidence of learning, as is the ability to use general strategies across a wide range of tasks and contexts. |

The most recent draft of the Content Standards Document in English Language Arts (NCTE, Fall, 1994) asserts principles of literacy development that are congruent with the transactional model. For example, the section on "Standards of the Profession" states that literacy:

- Is an active process of constructing meaning
- Is dynamic and changing
- Builds upon a student's cultural, intellectual, and linguistic experiences
- Is profoundly social

The document goes on to say, "Literacy skills and processes develop at many levels through construction of coherent meanings." Such descriptions of the learning process bring into serious question classroom practices that are teacher-centered and rely primarily on direct instruction in a predetermined scope-and-sequence curriculum. In a transactional model, students are active meaning makers, and language is both the vehicle and the object of learning. If we support this model of learning, literacy instruction as part of education reform must necessarily reject a narrow goal of correctness and received interpretation.

## Keeping the Student at the Center

There are curricular implications in a view of learning as personally constructed through social interaction. In a transactional model of learning, a negotiated curriculum—one with "many starting points and pathways" that is close to the life experiences of the learners and the expertise of the teachers—is essential (Darling-Hammond, 1994, p. 481). Many language and literacy educators are understandably concerned that such critical experiences in literacy learning are hardly addressed in the language of educational reform which speaks mainly of outcomes. In a transactional model of literacy learning the products or outcomes are inseparable from the processes in which the learner engages.

Teachers in the Washington focus group insist that schools need to have the flexibility and the freedom to develop the curriculum that best meets the needs of their students and their community. In

this approach, skills and strategies are learned in the process of purposeful inquiry, not according to a scope and sequence in reading or writing, for example. These educators are concerned that state and national reform efforts might place more emphasis on mandated content knowledge, with a "one size fits all" approach to curriculum.

Literacy educator and researcher Ken Goodman reminds us of John Dewey's idea that the curriculum be determined by the learner and the content. Outcomes-based standards, especially if framed at the national level, may be seen as leaving the learner out, thus scripting a standard curriculum leading to the same results for all students (Goodman, 1994). An active learning model presumes engagement, but as one recent study found, students became more disengaged "as curriculum, texts, and assignments became more standardized" (Nieto, 1994, p. 399). Ironically, as Linda Darling-Hammond points out, "The constructivist learning theory that undergirds much of the rhetoric of the new standards work is itself the major argument for not nationalizing new standards and assessments in a manner that would ultimately prescribe a national curriculum" (1994, p. 488).

Rather than define the content for study, curriculum statements in language arts might address relevant language and literacy strategies for students to develop in order to conduct meaningful inquiries in pursuit of new knowledge. Curriculum documents ought to emphasize the types of experiences that promote language and literacy development, thus balancing process with product. Montana's recently developed *Framework for Aesthetic Literacy* builds on Jerome Harste's idea of the disciplines as a lens for focusing student inquiry. The *Framework* invites students to pursue particular inquiry interests with perspectives offered by, for example, dance, art, literature, and music.

There is a very real tension between a curriculum in language arts which is rich and diverse, shaped by students' interests, needs, and experiences and a curriculum that is a body of content or skills, determined by the contents of performance assessments set outside the school. The challenge for educators and for professional organizations in writing the standards for English and language

arts is how to preserve the integrity of both the subject area and the student. "The subject may be public knowledge, but for better or worse, the learner digests it personally" (Moffett, 1992, p. 85). It is this focus on the learner and his/her lived experiences in the classroom that must be heightened in the educational reform agenda.

### *Questions for Reflection and Discussion*

- *What do we believe about how children learn oral and written language and develop effective uses of literacy?*
- *How do our classroom practices and materials reflect these beliefs?*
- *In our beliefs and practices, do we see any elements of a transactional model of learning? Any of a transmission model? How do we reconcile any differences?*
- *What experiences do we consider critical for students to develop the literacy skills, habits and attitudes we value? How do we provide these experiences—at school, at home?*
- *How do we value the literacy learning process as well as its products?*
- *How do students learn reading, writing, speaking and listening strategies in the process of purposeful learning?*
- *What role do students have in determining the literacy curriculum?*

## Views of Knowledge

### Knowledge as Discrete Content

The traditional view of knowledge as a body of content, perhaps fixed (or at least located) in a discipline, seems archaic. As knowledge—and electronic access to it—explodes, the argument over

which piece of information must be known or which text must be read by all becomes moot. Yet those who would ordain what is essential knowledge attract a following in the name of "high standards." Witness, for example, the popularity of E.D. Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy* and its sequels which spell out the required knowledge across content areas grade by grade.

Unfortunately, the development of national standards by content areas, such as English, mathematics, science, and history, may add to this sense of knowledge as a body of information fixed in separate disciplines. The language of Goals 2000 also implies this view when it calls for students to leave grades four, eight and 12 "having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter." Goal Three goes on to list 10 academic subjects in which that competency will be expected. With extensive standards for content knowledge written in each of these areas, there is a real question of whether trying to incorporate all of them might actually be counterproductive. That is, what will be the effect on progressive programs in which the goal is to integrate learning? Is such a commitment to "less is more," in-depth understanding likely to be undercut by mandated standards in separate content areas (Darling-Hammond, 1994)? This is a real worry.

## Knowledge as Connected Understandings

A more contemporary view of knowledge is of connections made by the learner across concepts and subject areas, using, as Harste suggests, the lenses of different disciplines. Teachers in the Oregon focus group see a need to provide students with a balanced experience of discipline-specific content and ways of knowing and curriculum integration for interdisciplinary thinking. Both within and across disciplines, in this view, knowledge is not certain; it is problematic. It results from problem posing and inquiry. Montana's *Framework for Aesthetic Literacy*, for example, is intended to provoke students' questions inspired by the arts, questions that will personally drive their learning. The *Framework* notes, "An inquiry emerges from the experiences and environments provided for the student. The danger of using planned theme cycles is that the teacher has stolen the Aha! from the student by interpreting and classifying the encounter into a theme" (Hahn, 1994, p. 14).

Such a model of knowledge rejects the notion of objective truth, asserting instead that events and texts have multiple meanings, arrived at by the learner through an active process of making meaning. In Oregon's Educational Act for the 21st Century, for example, student outcomes include the ability to "deliberate on public issues . . . by applying perspectives from the social sciences," "interpret human experience through literature and the visual and performing arts," and "direct his or her own learning, including planning and carrying out complex projects." These standards for what students know and can do call for cross-disciplinary understandings.

### Inquiry-driven Curriculum

At Sellwood Middle School in Portland, Oregon, students and teachers in the I-Team (the I stands for "integrated") construct the year's curriculum for the group of sixth- through eighth-graders around central questions chosen through a collaborative process. This process develops an academic program based on the students' questions and concerns about themselves and the world around them and the integration of reading, writing, social studies, math, science, health, and art. The curriculum helps students explore topics of interest to them. In the fall of 1994, for example, I-Team students decided one question for study would be the environmental impact—both positive and negative—of science and technology (Oldani, in press). Such an approach prepares students to demonstrate the integrated, performance-based learning that will be required for Oregon's Certificate of Initial Mastery.

This view of knowledge as springing from purposeful inquiry also conforms to the National Middle School Association's Curriculum Task Force's recommendation that learning experiences for middle school students should be "integrated, address students' own questions . . . and actively engage students in problem solving and a variety of experimental learning opportunities" (Curriculum Task Force, 1993). Learning in the I-Team is not served by predetermined texts and preplanned instruction in specific skills and strategies. Learning resources, including texts and other media, and the skills needed to pursue the inquiry are dependent on the questions chosen.

Inquiry-based learning goes much further than a scope-and-sequence curriculum. As literacy educator Kathy Short (1994) says: "What we create with inquiry isn't answers, it's understanding, which may change as we continue the inquiry. We inquire not to narrow down, fix an answer; we inquire to open up, unearth new questions, even increase confusion. The teacher does not know everything the student will discover."

***"We inquire not to narrow down, fix an answer; we inquire to open up, unearth new questions, even increase confusion."***

### Learning to Teach for Inquiry-based Learning

Washington and Oregon focus group participants are drawn to a curriculum that promotes integrated learning—one that develops in response to students' needs and interests. However, they stress the importance of staff development and support for teachers in such a model. Teachers need time and resources to develop new ways of teaching and integrating content areas. They need time, they add, to construct their own understandings across content lines. Trained as many were to teach literature and writing separate from social studies, science, and other areas, they need time and support to develop new ways of thinking right along with their students. Will state and national reform efforts address this need for teachers' learning, too? More to the point, will local schools and districts provide a means for teachers to work together as a community of learners?

Literature instruction is one area in which a view of learning as inquiry calls for substantial investment in professional development. Judith Langer (1994) describes her research on narrative thinking in terms of both students' and teachers' learning. Students' "envisionments"—the shifting understandings they have as they read and discuss literature—are crucial to their understanding of text. To the extent that teachers can help students trust and explore their own responses to text, students can learn to value the open-ended literary experience. They can develop increasingly complex responses

and apply analytical tools to text as well. But the goal is not getting to "the correct interpretation." A rich experience of literature, Langer asserts, leaves the door open; it doesn't wrap up or reach consensus at the end of the class period or unit of study. Here, again, the outcome—valued literary skills and strategies—cannot be separated from the process in which it is learned.

However, Langer notes, it can be difficult for teachers to learn how to promote narrative thinking, this sense of an ever-expanding horizon of possibilities in literature. Many have learned to rely on lesson plans with convergence on an interpretation as the goal. New expectations for students to construct meanings in literature; to make connections between literature and personal experience; and to develop multiple strategies to appreciate, interpret, and critique various types of literature and other media call for new ways of teaching. Supporting teachers as they develop these ways of working with students and with texts is essential. In short, meaningful education reform will not happen without supporting teachers.

### *Questions for Reflection and Discussion*

- *What opportunities do our students have for inquiry-driven learning? How can we help them develop language and literacy strategies that support rich inquiries?*

- *How do we currently help students develop "connected understandings" or integrated learning? What else might we do?*

- *In our classrooms is there a tension between covering content in separate subjects and designing in-depth learning experiences with a "less is more" philosophy? How do we deal with this tension?*

- *How do we provide support for teachers learning to teach for inquiry in their classrooms? Is time set aside for them to read about, discuss, and plan for inquiry learning? How are resources provided?*

## Equity Issues

### Opportunity-to-Learn Standards

In pursuit of excellence, educational reformers talk about providing a level playing field, ensuring that all children have the opportunity to learn in a rich and challenging curriculum. In language and literacy, however, there is a profound tension between equity and excellence. Especially in literacy, the stakes are high, since literacy is not a neutral skill: it is a primary means of access to educational, economic, and social success. What does it take to provide optimal literacy learning experiences? The latest draft of the NCTE standards calls for schools to provide:

> "educational opportunities with high expectations of performance and with responsibility for learning shared by students and teachers, to provide students with the opportunity to develop their literacy through a wide range of verbal, visual, technological and creative media offering multiple pathways to learning, knowing, and constructing meaning."

Equity in language and literacy demands that we talk about the *context* for learning, usually the classroom—its resources, processes, and interactions. Equity in access to school resources, including excellent teachers, should be the starting place of school reforms which aim to improve student learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 1994). Noting that content and performance standards are not very effective as a vehicle for leveraging resource equalization, Darling-Hammond suggests that "inequalities in learning opportunities must be addressed head-on if they are ever to be successfully removed" (1994, p. 481).

Addressing these inequalities by including opportunity-to-learn standards in reform documents has been a controversial issue, however. The Standards Project for English Language Arts lost its federal funding earlier this year largely because of its inclusion of opportunity-to-learn standards (Flanagan, 1994). Proponents of opportunity-to-learn standards in Goals 2000 were able to keep

them in that bill, but as Penelope Early of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education noted, the language is "fuzzy" and "about every fifth word is 'voluntary'" (Flanagan, 1994, p. 5). Early succinctly concludes,

> "Teachers are darn tired of having situations where there aren't enough textbooks; where there aren't laboratories; where there are school buildings that are wanting in terms of basic comfort; and yet they're accused when the students don't learn" (Flanagan, 1994, p. 4).

Of particular relevance to equity and excellence in literacy are the findings in the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Writing Report Card on resources and writing performance. Class size for 15 percent of students nationally and for 30 percent of students in disadvantaged urban areas was more than 30. Such numbers raise obstacles to both the amount of writing students produce and the frequency and quality of teacher response to students' writing. Also, 40 percent of students had teachers who reported that insufficient resources were available to them. A particularly striking finding dealt with computers. The benefits of computer use to both the process and products of students' writing have been well documented. Yet the Writing Report Card found that schools with low performance on the NAEP had far less access to computers than did high-performing schools. Computers were not available for 48 percent of the eighth-graders in the bottom-performing one-third of the schools, compared to 26 percent in the top-performing one-third of schools (Applebee et al., 1994, p. 11). Teachers in both the Washington and Oregon focus groups worry that schools are currently preparing two societies: one that is technologically literate as a result of access to high-tech resources, and the other with neither the access nor the know-how. Echoing that concern, Alaska teachers who were recently surveyed on preferred areas for staff development in literacy instruction place "supporting literacy development with technology" among their top five choices.

## Diversity as Strength

The language arts curriculum must both promote unity and celebrate diversity, indeed see diversity among students as a strength in our schools and in our society. Teachers in the Washington and Oregon focus groups describe their commitment to both equity and excellence as providing a challenging literacy curriculum to all and creating a psychologically safe learning environment. This idea of a safe learning environment reflects a transactional learning model in which risk-taking is encouraged, understood by both teacher and student to be the basis for learning. The goal is not to avoid making mistakes but to build successively better approximations of the desired learning or skill. Creating a classroom in which all students feel this kind of safety as learners is fundamental to achieving equity and excellence in language and literacy learning.

***The language arts curriculum must both promote unity and celebrate diversity, indeed see diversity among students as a strength in our schools and in our society.***

Teachers in the Oregon focus group assert that literacy educators must confront equity issues in society, in part by guaranteeing all students access to real-world literacy. Specific school practices they recommend to ensure optimal literacy development among diverse student populations are elimination of tracking or ability grouping, increased use of multicultural literature and celebration of multiple literacies, and provision of many ways for students to interact with each other as well as with the teacher in language and literacy learning experiences.

Washington focus group teachers stress the importance of valuing students' native language and supporting it through bilingual education; helping students value diversity among their classmates; building stronger ties between school and home, especially bridging the gap for non-English speaking parents; building on students' home culture to find vehicles for meaningful literacy learning at school; and respecting culture and learning style in the content of

instruction, expectations for learning, and assessments. Fundamental to providing equity in learning opportunities for students, they add, is meeting teachers' needs for serving increasingly diverse students, both the gifted and the disadvantaged, students with limited English skills, and students in need of special education. In ensuring equity, as in realizing other aspects of education reform, meaningful change will not happen without adequate support for the teachers who will make the changes.

## The Classroom as a Community

Seeing the classroom as a community has great relevance to achieving the twin goals of equity and excellence. Central to education reform is the goal of providing a challenging curriculum for all instead of high levels of education for a few. A movement away from competition toward collaborative ways of learning is important here. However, the bureaucratic organization of schools has traditionally isolated individuals and fostered competitiveness. In fact, a number of educational researchers have found evidence that bureaucratic management practices fuel inequities in students' access to learning. (Murphy, 1994, p. 13). One example of such a practice is tracking, in which academically weaker students are denied access to the top learners and the interaction with them that could support their own learning. In contrast to the competitive, bureaucratic model, a community concept affirms the value of shared efforts, supports experimentation, and respects individual differences as benefiting the whole group's learning (Clark and Astuto, 1994).

A report from the Claremont Graduate School gives a moving account of the need to construct communities in classrooms and schools. *Voices from the Inside: A Report on Schooling from Inside the Classroom* (Poplin and Weeres, 1994) contains the results of an intensive study of four urban and suburban schools in California. So many educational reform plans begin—and end—outside the classroom and result in recommendations that only minimally affect the life of the classroom. In contrast, this report isolated the seven central concerns or problems experienced by members of the school: teachers, students, administrators, staff, and parents. In order of importance these central concerns are:

1. **Relationships.** Especially important are relationships between teachers and students, but also important are relationships among teachers, among students, and between parents and teachers.

2. **Race, culture, and class.** Increasingly bicultural and bilingual student bodies are being taught by a predominantly monocultural and monolingual teaching force.

3. **Values.** Participants need to discuss fundamental values and to articulate shared values across race, culture, and class so that students have a network of adults (parents and teachers) with whom they can "really talk about important things."

4. **Teaching and learning.** Teachers need to actively participate in curriculum design and to have access to their professional community; students need to be actively engaged in meaningful learning.

5. **Safety.** Students and staff need to feel physically and psychologically safe at school.

6. **Physical environment.** The need for adequate public and private space, aesthetic appeal, order, and rich materials and media for learning must be addressed.

7. **Despair, hope and the process of change.** The school must support dialogues about the needs of the school and engage participants in planning for change that is relevant to them.

The first three concerns—relationships, race/culture/class, and values—are especially crucial to the twin goals of equity and excellence. Students need to feel cared about and respected by teachers and supported and welcomed by each other. One student identified a critical problem of schooling by saying, "This place hurts my spirit!" (Poplin and Weeres, 1994, p. 11). The authors note the negative consequences on learning, and even threats to physical safety, when relationships between and among students and teachers are poor.

In his work with the Coalition of Essential Schools, Ted Sizer

places community-building at the center of real reform. He maintains that community and commitment develop through "personalization of learning," a process in which students are well known by significant adults, including teachers and administrators. To know students really well, teachers can't possibly work with 150 of them a day (not an uncommon load for a high school English teacher). Student-teacher ratios must be reduced (Sizer, 1995).

Exacerbating the problem with relationships are issues of race, culture, and class. Expectations and attitudes that support some students and demean others do not begin with schools, but they inhabit schools just as they do society at large. As one teacher in the California study pointed out:

> "Racism and prejudice is embedded in the educational institution. If the majority of teachers are representatives of the dominant culture, what does that, in itself, communicate to students who are not in the dominant culture? Combine that with the choice of curriculum and subject matter. If 90 percent of the subject matter taught in schools is from the Western European viewpoint, what does that communicate to a student who is not in the dominant culture?" (Poplin and Weeres, 1994, p. 27).

When students experience inequity in regard to race, culture, and class, they lose their voice in the learning community. For language and literacy learning, this loss is devastating.

Finally, the authors note, assumptions that different cultural groups bring very different values to the experience of schooling are going unchallenged. The lack of time and attention to exploring commonly held values among members of the school community is a serious drawback to building healthy learning communities.

From these repeatedly voiced concerns about schools, the authors conclude that those of us interested in school transformation in the United States must do three things before we attempt other reforms:

1. Change the nature of the national conversation about the problems of public education to include the seven issues discussed previously.

2. Reexamine current policies and practices, as well as proposed solutions, in light of these seven issues.

3. Develop productive participatory processes by which all the participants inside schools can name for themselves the problems and promises that exist at each school site. Using this knowledge, students, teachers, and staff can design the transformation of that site.

The last point echoes the major recommendation of the Washington focus group: that reforms be supported and designed locally, through collaborative cohorts of educators, parents, and community members.

**Assessment**

Another important change to promote equity is in assessment. Given the centrality of language and literacy to all learning, ensuring fair and accurate assessment is crucial. Oregon focus group participants express a concern that the current emphasis on performance-based outcomes has resulted in more attention to assessment than to appropriate instruction. They worry that existing inequities in access to and outcomes in literacy might be exacerbated by such a focus on assessment. They urge schools and teachers to pay more attention to the classroom literacy experiences provided for students. At the same time, they recommend development and use of multiple means of assessment, with a primary emphasis on assessment to serve the learner. Assessment should be a learning experience as well as a means of monitoring growth.

For example, in broadening the assessment system to include portfolios with student self-reflections, students are offered diverse ways of demonstrating their knowledge. This should parallel the provision of diverse ways of developing these understandings. The NCTE IRA Joint Task Force on Assessment (1994) includes fair and equitable assessment as one of the standards for assessment of reading and writing. Not only does this mean that evaluation instru-

ments should be free of biases in such areas as culture, gender, nationality, socioeconomic condition, and physical disability, but also that assessment itself should help teachers and learners confront biases that exist in the school.

In a ringing endorsement of the value of diversity in language and literacy, the Joint Task Force document goes on to assert that language and meaning are socially constructed. Language and life experiences can vary tremendously across cultural, economic, and geographic situations.

> "Consequently, students will differ enormously in the interpretations they give to the texts they read, the topics they feel comfortable writing about, and the ways they respond to different forms of assessment" (1994, p. 22).

### *Questions for Reflection and Discussion*

- *What inequalities of learning opportunities need to be addressed in our school?*
- *Given limited resources, how can we use them equitably to ensure the language and literacy experiences and outcomes we value for students?*
- *How does our literacy program value the experiences of various cultural, language, national and gender groups? How do we communicate a belief in diversity as a strength of our community?*
- *In what ways do the seven concerns described in* Voices from the Inside *apply to our school?*
- *Given the positive impact on student learning of strong school-home connections, what are we doing to engage all parents, especially nonmainstream parents, in the life of the school?*
- *How do we approach dialect and language differences in our school? How do we provide support for students with limited English proficiency?*

- *What evidence is there that our classrooms and our school feel like a community? How do we ensure that everyone is a valued member? (What does it feel like to be a student, teacher, parent here?)*

## Purposes of Education

### Preparation for Higher Education and Work

A criticism of traditional education has been that it does a better job of preparing students who are college-bound than it does of preparing students who will enter the workforce or pursue work-related training after high school graduation. At the same time, it is important to ensure that educational reform does not swing too far in the other direction, with learning experiences and materials focused exclusively on workforce preparation. Joanne Yatvin warns against such limited thinking when she argues for "educational visions unclouded by political pressure to cover academic ground, raise test scores, or produce workers for industry" (1994, p. 37).

Discussion of the purposes of education should be a central part of education reform processes. In the earlier example of the negotiated, inquiry-based curriculum devised by students and teachers at Sellwood Middle School, education for a variety of purposes—some determined by the individual—is an implicit value. But as state and national reform documents develop, most standards seem primarily to address education's role in serving society's purposes, for example by providing skilled workers who can think, communicate, and collaborate.

### Social and Personal Uses

Education in the United States has historically served a larger purpose, though: the preparation of young people for full participation in our democracy. Language and literacy are primary vehicles for this participation. In fact, the English Coalition Conference of 1987 titled its report *Democracy Through Language*. The report recalls John Dewey's persuasive argument for democratic classrooms as the necessary foundation for such disposition and action.

It is significant to contrast the language of education reform in this document with that which dominates contemporary reform documents. The English Coalition Conference envisioned students who are readers and writers, who find satisfaction and pleasure in reading and writing and engage in them for personal as well as social reasons. Participants wanted students to learn to use language to understand themselves and others, to make sense of their world, and to reflect on their lives. The conference stressed the need for students to use language as a tool to get things done and to "take charge of their lives" (Lloyd-Jones and Lunsford, 1989, p. 3).

These personally meaningful, and personally controlled, uses of literacy are absent from National Education Goal Three, which addresses student achievement and citizenship. The goal is for students to demonstrate competency over "challenging subject matter" in English and other content areas; the purposes of such competency are described as "responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment." No one would dispute that these are important purposes of education. The question is whether they are the only ones.

There is reason for concern that the schools' mandate regarding literacy is geared to preparation of students for the workplace and for public or communal life, but not necessarily for personal literacy, or literacy to serve's the learner's own purposes. Washington educators in the focus group want to help students understand and use the various structures of literacy to serve them well after they leave school. Writing to communicate effectively in the workplace is one of these structures. However, they assert that we come to this kind of other-focused writing only by much experience of personally motivated, "self-serving" uses of writing. In the same way, the ability to read and interpret across a variety of texts is dependent upon finding personally meaningful uses of reading. If literacy instruction in education reform overemphasizes workforce preparation, educators might short-circuit affective dimensions of language and literacy use, especially personal choice in reading texts and writing topics. If that happens, preparation of students as readers and writers will suffer and the hope of a literate workforce will go largely unrealized.

### Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- *What purposes do we have for developing students' language and literacy? How are these purposes expressed in classroom practices? To what extent do students determine their own purposes for language and literacy?*
- *What opportunities do students have for choice in our curriculum: topics of study, materials, activities?*
- *In what ways do we provide opportunities for socially constructed topics of study?*
- *How is curriculum planned in our school?*

## The Role of Teachers

The attitude toward teachers in education reform is particularly important to discern. Are teachers professionals, whose development of theory in practice is essential to meaningful school reform? Are teachers the mediators between the learner and the material to be learned? Are they more important than tests? Should, in fact, improved teacher knowledge and school capacity be the starting points for systemic change? (Darling-Hammond, 1994). Or are teachers technicians, who will implement educational reform that authorities outside of the classroom design and dictate? Darling-Hammond describes this latter view as the "assumption of hierarchical intelligence"—that the higher the level of government, the better its decisions (1994, p. 493). For schools, this principle has resulted in a bureaucratic operation, which has largely treated teachers as but one of many tools at the disposal the educational institution. However, there is ample evidence that the best hope for meaningful improvements in literacy instruction lies with support for teachers as professionals.

***Are teachers professionals, whose development of theory in practice is essential to meaningful school reform?***

## Teachers as Technicians

Implicit in much of the educational reform agenda is a view of teachers as technicians (Clark and Astuto, 1994). In fact, the language of much educational reform is that of distrust and inspection. Students—and teachers—are seen as needing the external motivation of high-stakes testing to improve. What's needed is training in techniques, as determined somewhere up the hierarchy. The focus on training teachers in new instructional and assessment strategies reflects this bias. In Oregon, for example, letter grades will be replaced with student performance evaluated with a score on a six-point rubric. Much of the staff development offered in support of Oregon's Educational Act for the 21st Century has been in designing performance tasks and writing rubrics. The assumption that these technical changes in student assessment and evaluation of the results is sufficient to improve student learning outcomes seems unquestioned.

This is not to say that improving assessment is an inappropriate aspect of educational reform. The concern raised here is the lack of support for local inquiry by teachers into connections between assessment and learning. Instead, technical training in new assessments is provided. Teachers, too, construct their own knowledge; their active engagement with assessment development and evaluation of student work fosters deeper understandings of curriculum and student learning (Darling-Hammond, 1994).

## Teachers as Professionals

A view of teachers as professionals affirms their authority to make decisions about their practice and to work collaboratively to determine the wisest course of instructional action (Clark and Astuto, 1994). The Washington focus group, for example, describes the need to develop understanding of community-valued learner outcomes and how to assess them in regard to changing expectations for student performance in language and literacy. They further recommend the following staff development support to ensure quality literacy instruction as part of education reform: supporting teacher research within their buildings; maintaining ongoing support groups for teachers engaged in a common task, such as infusing writing as a learning strategy across the curriculum; allowing

teachers at the local (building) level to set their agenda for professional development; designing staff development to model keeping learners at the center; and using teachers as instructional leaders, relying less on outside experts for staff development. Their rejection of bureaucratic structures in favor of collaborative ones is emphatic. Perhaps all education, like politics, is local, and teachers are its major agents.

Clark and Astuto second this thought and capture a concern expressed in the Claremont Graduate School Study, as well as in the Washington and Oregon focus groups:

> No one can reform our schools for us. If there is to be authentic reform in American education, it must be a grass-roots movement. Systemic reformers will have to be resisted systematically, for they are distracting us from the job at hand. The only system we have is the local community school, and external agencies should be worrying about how they can help and support these school units—not about how they can dominate them. (1994, p. 520)

Of primary importance to all of these affirmations of teachers as professionals is time, and, since time is money, that too. Teachers view with skepticism state and national reform agendas that ask them to teach more and better, but don't provide the collegial time and professional support to make meaningful changes. The Washington and Oregon teachers emphasize their need to be recognized as professionals. It is essential to have release time within their work day and work year for planning instructional changes, reflecting on their own practice in order to develop pedagogical understandings, and accessing supportive networks of individuals and professional groups. Oregon teachers suggest that some of this time be used in dialogue among teachers spanning the K-12 system to promote better understandings of common principles of learning as well as awareness of developmental stages. In the same way, several language arts educators in Alaska provide important clarification about their choices for staff development. Though they give a higher rating to institutes or externally organized professional development opportunities, they note that they would actually pre-

fer locally organized, teacher-run opportunities such as study groups or teacher research projects. However, they are not willing to engage in such professionally demanding work without the guarantee of time to do it well. A commitment to the professional development of teachers necessitates release time from teaching; this is essential for reflective practice.

### *Questions for Reflection and Discussion*

- *To what extent are teachers involved in the design of local staff development?*
- *How might we design a local staff development collaborative to tap the "experts among us?"*
- *What topics in language and literacy are we interested in learning more about? How might we work together to do that?*
- *How can we guarantee at least some time within the work day and school year to support teachers' professional development?*
- *How might we implement staff development models that approach teachers as learners and as professionals, such as Teachers as Readers, reading study groups, teacher inquiry groups, or action research?*

## The Role of Standards

### Gatekeepers or Motivators

One of the most serious of the tensions surrounding the role of language and literacy in educational reform is the issue of standards. Reminiscent of the heated debates in recent decades over writing as a process or as a product, discussion of standards tends to polarize participants. In a top-down, bureaucratic model of education reform, standards serve as gatekeepers, sorting students into academic (or performance) haves and have-nots, even driving curriculum standardization. They may be seen as establishing a "high

bar" which some students will get over, and others will not.

But in a collaborative, grass-roots model, standards are motivators, guides for improvement. They actually support learning as students contribute to their definition and apply them to their own work with increasing sophistication. Standards here set forth a vision of what literacy learning can look like; they offer models and encouragement. This latter use of standards to support student learning is essential to serving democratic ends, ensuring equity of learning outcomes. If standards are to be useful to students, they need to be accessible and applicable during the learning process, to foster, not just to judge, competence (Rose, 1991). This type of standard can be embraced by progressive educators as democratic and developmental-minded.

As the national standards in English and language arts emerge, their use in local schools is an important issue for teachers. The Washington focus group sees standards as opportunities, not mandates, in which the needs and interests of local communities will be respected. Similarly, Oregon teachers call for a balance in literacy programs between setting forth standards of excellence and valuing and nurturing individual differences. Using the national standards to inform rather than to direct local and state efforts reflects a view of standards as motivators and a respect for teachers as professionals.

### Fixed or Dynamic

The nature, as well as the use, of standards is also important to discuss. A view of standards as fixed and immutable tends toward narrowing curricular content, emphasizing replication of traditional forms, and safeguarding the canon against invaders. Fixed standards also tend to be imposed on schools from outside agencies. They occur in a top-down process, often driven by business. However, like language, standards may be seen as dynamic. In this view, the process of consensus building around what constitutes quality writing, effective communication, and appropriate responses to literature is inextricably linked to the learning. Such an interactive process of standards development is certainly more consistent with an education system dedicated to democratic ideals. It's also more reflective of the shifts in standards for literacy performance

over our history, for example, from a "signature" definition in the early days to our present requirements for informed literate participation in social, political, and economic realms.

It is important to note that this process of consensus building has been the approach to developing the national standards in English and language arts. With more than 300 charter groups of teachers nationwide responding to drafts written by task forces working at elementary, middle, and high school levels, this has indeed been a dynamic process. Yet, one of the reasons given for the funding cutoff was that this collaborative process took too much time. Given its preference for more prescriptive content standards (for example a canon of children's literature) the funding agency seems to have been working with a fixed model of standards, in contrast to the literacy profession's dynamic one.

**Development and Implementation**

The development of national standards across all curriculum areas was in fact prompted by a grass-roots effort of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, which produced the standards for mathematics. As noted, the council's impetus was to share a vision of outstanding mathematics teaching and learning. Ironically, subsequent standards projects have been burdened with top-down expectations, because the projects resulted from a national mandate. As decisions are made above the level of the professional groups working on the standards (for example, the decision to remove opportunity-to-learn standards) the commitment to equity in implementing the standards is seriously compromised.

Other dilemmas in the implementation of standards abound. How, for example, will standards be used to establish meaningful indicators and guidance for states, districts, and schools and still remain flexible enough to accommodate many different strategies for providing high-quality, appropriate education? The English and language arts standards, still in development, attempt to bridge this gap by including real-life classroom vignettes to illustrate the various content standards and link them to the standards of the profession. Another approach separates delivery from professional practice standards (Darling-Hammond, 1994). It is possible to specify

standards for delivery systems which create incentives for local and state education agencies to ensure that schools receive adequate resource allocation, including highly qualified teachers. Separate from these delivery system standards are standards for practice such as those now being developed by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association. They can be used to guide the type of building-based teacher inquiry, collaborative staff development, and instructional improvement envisioned by the Washington and Oregon focus groups.

***To be truly useful, standards must be accompanied by serious efforts to build schools' capacity to teach in ways that can achieve these learning goals (Darling-Hammond, 1994).***

Two caveats conclude this section on the tensions inherent in developing and implementing standards in language arts. One has been alluded to earlier in discussions of the need to involve teachers and community members locally in naming and addressing the needs or problems of their school. There is a tendency to rely too heavily on national standards to bring about systemic reform, but as Sizer and his colleagues noted in the opening quote, the "here" is a crucial component in the question of "what's good enough here." To be truly useful, standards must be accompanied by serious efforts to build schools' capacity to teach in ways that can achieve these learning goals (Darling-Hammond, 1994). Instead of being ends in themselves, standards begin the process of policy development to ensure that schools have what it takes—teacher knowledge, materials, and research at the local level—to create good curriculum for their students.

The second caveat comes from Jerome Harste, (1994) who warns:

> "There is a tendency in standards to focus on the individual, to pull us away from the socially lived experience that school should be. Coupled with that

> is a rush to assessment, in effect closing down the dialogue about literacy and learning just when it's starting."

If standards can be part of ongoing inquiry into the nature and processes of language and literacy, they can serve teachers, learners, and the public well. If, however, language arts standards are set forth to end inquiry and discussion about learning in this area, they will accomplish little of value for the profession or the public.

### *Questions for Reflection and Discussion*

- *Do we have written standards for content, performance, and opportunity to learn in our literacy program? If yes, what vision of literacy do our standards set forth?*
- *If no, how might we arrive at locally acceptable standards for our literacy program?*
- *What evidence of achievement do we use to assess students' meeting the standards?*
- *How do we address the needs of students who are not meeting the standards?*
- *How might we use the standards set forth in state and national documents to guide development of our literacy curriculum?*

## Conclusion

### Can We Talk?

Teachers in our focus groups, survey population, and various professional workshops continually stress the need for dialogue about significant issues in education reform. For many participants in the focus groups, this was the first opportunity they had had to talk with other educators about literacy and language issues raised by state and national reform efforts. Participants in the Oregon focus group urge teachers, administrators, and parents to engage in substantive dialogue to resolve tensions such as those between excellence and equity, the language of power and home dialects, and curriculum as inquiry and curriculum as content. Creating the schools we want depends in no small part on initiating and sustaining conversations among members of the school community on these and other important topics in education reform.

A number of schools that have participated in the LLCP early literacy project, aimed at schoolwide improvement of the literacy program, have determined that teacher dialogue to build shared understandings is essential to any future work on instructional materials or strategies. School literacy programs have benefited from local development of literacy and language philosophies. Carol Santa (1995) describes how such a project worked in the Kalispell, Montana, school district. The process allows staff to find common ground and to arrive at what one teacher describes as "sufficient consensus" about literacy content, processes, and outcomes.

Once teachers are engaged in this reflection on their beliefs about language and literacy, they can move to an examination of the fit—or lack thereof—between these beliefs and current literacy practices, including teaching strategies, classroom organization, and materials. And, of course, they can now look at these practices in light of their shared understandings of the state and national reform documents and the standards draft.

The following example of belief statements and appropriate literacy practices reflects a transactional literacy learning model.

Teachers may wish to examine it in light of the most recent English and language arts standards draft, state documents on literacy and language learning, and the National Education Goals. A statement such as this, optimally designed by teachers themselves through a process of shared inquiry and reflection, might be a vehicle to connect education reform documents and the lived experience of the classroom. Cognizant of the larger education reform mandate "out there," teachers can still direct their energies to literacy program design suited to the best local vision of, in Sizer's words, "what's good enough here." For teachers, students, and parents, what we do here—in local schools—is all important.

## A Statement on Literacy Beliefs and Classroom Practices: Language and Learning Are Closely Linked

Reading, writing, speaking, and listening are language, so they share the essential characteristics of language. These qualities also describe learning, which occurs through the use of language. Teachers may consider ways in which their classrooms incorporate practices that reflect these characteristics of language and learning.

***Language and learning are social.***

*Classroom practices:*

- Students are working together in pairs, small groups and large groups.
- Students talk more than, or as much as, the teacher does.
- Classroom talk develops, as well as communicates, student understandings.
- Students share their writing and their reading.
- Students ask, as well as answer, questions.

***Language and learning are meaningful.***

*Classroom practices:*

- Skills and strategies are learned through actual use; students do real reading and writing, not exercises or worksheets.
- Print always makes sense; reading instruction focuses on making meaning.
- Students have choices of books to read and topics to write about.
- Learning is guided by genuine questions children have about a topic.

***Learners use language to construct knowledge.***

*Classroom practices:*

- Students apply their experience to new learning and to texts. They make and modify predictions on this basis.
- Students generate and replace "rules" of language as their experience allows, for example, using invented spelling and approximations in written conventions.
- Students talk and write about new learning, for example, discussing texts and keeping learning logs or journals.
- Students work together in small groups on problems or tasks.

***Reading, writing, speaking, and listening are interdependent.***

*Classroom practices:*

- Students write frequently and share their works in progress, for example, participating in author's chair and response groups.
- Students engage in role plays, simulations, dramatic play, storytelling, and readers' theater.

- Students respond orally and in writing to reading.

***Learning is developmental.***

*Classroom practices:*

- The teacher and accomplished students provide many demonstrations of how readers and writers work.
- Approximation—getting close, rather than "getting it right"—is celebrated.
- Assessment is ongoing; the teacher keeps track of student learning, for example, anecdotally, on checklists, and from work collections. Students know what they have learned and what they are working to learn.
- Growth, not mastery, is the goal.

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## Resources

*The School as a Community*

Larry Hill
Keys to Creating Community in Schools
4794 Wilson Creek Rd., SE
Port Orchard, Washington 98366
(360) 871-2580

*Parent/Teacher Collaboratives for Educational Inquiry*

Kathy Egawa
457 N. 79th
Seattle, Washington 98103
(206) 783-5536

*Teachers as Researchers*

Ruth Hubbard
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Portland, Oregon 97219
(503) 768-7768

Karen Guilfoyle
Teacher Education
University of Idaho
Moscow, Idaho 83843
(208) 885-6049

*Literature Discussion Groups for Professionals*

Teachers as Readers
Millie Davis
NCTE
1111 W. Kenyon Rd.
Urbana, IL 61801-1096
(217) 328-3870

# Appendix A

## High Standards: Essential Learnings for Washington Students

The essential learnings address what students should know and be able to do in four areas: communication, reading, writing, and mathematics. They were developed under the supervision of the Commission on Student Learning, established as part of a statewide education reform effort mandated by the Washington State Legislature in 1993.

## Oregon's Educational Act for the 21st Century

Oregon's Educational Act for the 21st Century was passed by the Oregon State Legislature in 1991. Key provisions in the Act are creation of the Certificate of Initial Mastery for students to achieve in about the 10th grade and the Certificate of Advanced Mastery for students to achieve in about the 12th grade. Eleven outcomes for the Certificate of Initial Mastery were adopted by the State Board of Education in 1993. Required curriculum in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, economics, civics, government, literature, the arts, and languages will provide the academic foundation for students to achieve the 11 outcomes. To achieve the Certificate of Advanced Mastery students will focus their study on one or more areas of interest—arts and communications, business and management, health services, human resources, industry and engineering, and natural resources.

## Alaska Student Performance Standards

In 1994, the State Board of Education adopted student performance standards in three subject areas—math, science, and English language arts. The standards represent what Alaskans want their students to know and be able to do in these subject areas as a result of their public schooling. The standards in English language arts address performance in speaking, listening, reading, and writing; strategies for independent and cooperative learning; thinking skills; and understanding and respecting diverse perspectives.

**The National Educational Goals (as revised in *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*)**

The National Education Goals, drafted by the nation's governors in 1989, were codified in national legislation in March, 1994 as *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*. The legislation calls on states to set world-class standards and high expectations for all students and sets aside federal funding to support states' efforts to attain the goals. Within that framework, Goals 2000 gives states wide latitude to mesh legislative requirements with existing reform strategies.

*Goal 1—School Readiness.* By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn.

*Goal 2—School Completion.* By the year 2000, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.

*Goal 3—Student Achievement and Citizenship.* By the year 2000, all students will leave grades 4, 8 and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography, and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our Nation's modern economy.

*Goal 4—Teacher Education and Professional Development.* By the year 2000, the Nation's teaching force will have access to programs for the continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century.

*Goal 5—Mathematics and Science.* By the year 2000, United States students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement.

*Goal 6—Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning.* By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

*Goal 7—Safe, Disciplined, and Alcohol- and Drug-Free Schools.* By the year 2000, every school in the United States will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

*Goal 8—Parental Participation.* By the year 2000, every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.

- Notes -

**About the Author**

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